

**Dr. A. Rufus Tonnelson's recollections about the Miami football game in 1932**



Interviewer: ....I keep hearing about a trip that the football team took to Miami about 1932. Could you tell me what that... what are your recollections about that?

*Well, I think what happened there, if I am not mistaken in some of this, some of this I gathered in later years. The University of Miami had written a letter to William and Mary, in regards to scheduling William and Mary for a football game. Somehow or the other, the letter came to the Norfolk Division instead of being sent to Williamsburg. So, the contract was signed and sent down or returned to the University of Miami. And the result was that our football team, in 1932, went down and played the University of Miami. This was the year before they instituted the Orange Bowl Game, so we for many years used to say that actually we were the first team to play in the Orange Bowl. If memory serves me correctly, the football team went down there with a number of faculty sponsors, I know Lewis Webb was one. They went down in a Pullman Car. When they got to Miami, the Pullman was shunted on the sidetrack and that's where they stayed until they returned to Norfolk. It was a close fought game. And I think that the final score was Miami 6 and we had 2. They gave us a safety to protect their touchdown lead late in the game. They actually gave us a safety, otherwise, they would have had to punt.*

Interviewer: That was a four year school.

*Right. Ours, of course was a two-year school. We had a number of outstanding boys that Scott had recruited. They seemed to have come from all over. I guess today some of the boys may have been questioned as to the academic status at the time, 'cause I know that a number of them after football season was over, just withdrew from school. But, we had only a very successful season that year. If I am not mistaken, we had only lost one game previous to the time that we played Miami. I think our record then was something like 9 victories and one defeat, and Scott had started to upgrade the football schedule. We were playing smaller colleges like East Carolina Teachers College (which is now East Carolina University) or Lewisburg, I think we played the Catholic University freshmen that year, so all in all it was a very successful year. As I say, that was the story that I heard, that the letter Miami had sent to William and Mary, somehow got to Norfolk and we signed the contract and showed up.*

Interviewer: Did they know that it was us before we got down there?

*I don't think so. I've never heard their version of the story. Because, it was as I say, one fine football game and certainly the Norfolk Division acquitted itself, I think, as well as William and Mary perhaps would have done. [page 1]*

Full interview July 2, 1979:

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